

Message Text

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CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 2990

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, BG

SUBJ: RUMORS GALORE ON GOVERNMENT CHANGES

SUMMARY: RUMORS PUSHED TO SIDE DURING BHUTTO VISIT ARE ONCE AGAIN FULLY IN EVIDENCE. ALL PORTEND SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES IN WAY BENGALLEES RULE THEMSELVES BUT NONE HAVE YET TAKEN ON ANY SUBSTANCE. ALL SUGGEST, HOWEVER, THAT TREND TOWARD INCREASED CENTRALIZATION MAY BE GAINING NEW IMPETUS ALTHOUGH MANNER IN WHICH THIS WOULD INCREASE QUALITY OF GOVERNANCE IS HARD TO SEE. END SUMMARY.

1. WITH DIVERSION OF BHUTTO VISIT NOW PASSED AND, IN VIEW ITS ABORTIVE CHARACTER, ACTIVELY BEING PUT OUT OF MIND, DACCA IS ONCE AGAIN AWASH IN RUMORS OF IMPENDING CHANGES OF FUNDAMENTAL CHARACTER. MEETING OF AWAMI LEAGUE SCHEDULED FOR JULY 2 BUT NOW MOVED TO JULY 6 REMAINS FOCUS OF ATTENTION AS STORIES CONTINUE TO CIRCULATE THAT RULING PARTY WILL PROPOSE AMENDING CONSTITUTION TO ESTABLISH PRESIDENTIAL FORM OF GOVERNMENT, THUS OBVIATING WHAT
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MINUSCULE ROOM MAY PRESENTLY EXIST FOR PRESIDENT AND PRPE MIN-

ISTER TO COME INTO CONFRONTATION. MUJIB WOULD, OF COURSE, ASSUME THE PRESIDENCY, AND ONE VERSION POSITS THAT MUCH SUBORDINATED PREMIERSHIP WOULD GO TO TAJUDDIN AHMED.

2. THIS IMPULSE TOWARDS CENTRALISM AND AUTOCRACY ALSO FOUND IN RUMORS THAT THE NATIONAL AWAMI PARTY/MUZAFFAR (NAP/M) AND THE CPB ARE ABOUT TO MERGE WITH THE AWAMI LEAGUE; AN AFTERMATH OF THIS STEP IS SEEN AS PROSCRIPTION OF ALL OTHER PARTIES. IN LESS DRAMATIC FASHION, THERE ARE TAYES THAT RULING PARTY SEEKS ONLY TO BIND MORE CLOSELY THE NAP/M AND THE CPB THROUGH INCLUSION OF PARTY MEMBERS IN CABINET.

3. COMPOSITION OF PRESENT CABINET IS SUBJECT OF MUCH TALK. THERE HAVE LONG BEEN STORIES CURRENT THAT UP TO SEVEN MEMBERS OF PRESENT GOVERNMENT BEING READIED FOR OUSTER, AND THEIR PLACES COULD WELL BE TAKEN BY NAP/M AND CPB MEMBERS. ADDITIONAL STORIES THAT CABINET TO BE SLIMMED FROM PRESENT 20 TO 14 OR POSSIBLY TO A COUNCIL OF 5, ACCOMMODATING THOSE WHO MUST BE ACCOMMODATED, WOULD SUGGEST THAT, IF ATTEMPTED, IT WILL BE TRICKY BUSINESS. OF COURSE, IF THESE STORIES HAVE ANY SUBSTANCE, THEY WILL BE SUBJECT OF DISCUSSION AT AWAMI LEAGUE'S JULY 6 MEETING. MUJIB REPORTEDLY TOLD VISITING JOURNALIST LAST NIGHT THAT HE WOULD FIRE ONE MINISTER FOR CORRUPTION THIS WEEK AND ALLEGEDLY CONFIRMED THAT MERGER WAS IN THE WORKS TO REUNITE SOME DISSIDENT ELEMENTS IN ONE-PARTY STATE.

4. THERE ARE, OF COURSE, MANY OTHER TALES ABROAD. LABOR UNIONS RECEIVE THEIR SHARE OF ATTENTION, WITH SUPPRESSION OF ALL UNIONS ONE VARIATION, MERGER OF ALL UNIONS ANOTHER, AND DESIGNATION OF A SINGLE UNION AS SOLE REPRESENTATIVE LABOR A THIRD. RESORT TO PRESIDENT'S RULE OPOS UP AS DOES SUGGESTION THAT DISTRICTS BE GIVEN POLITICAL "GOVERNORS" AS A WAY OF EXTENDING CONTROL OF RULING PARTY.

5. COMMENT: IN ALL OF THIS WELTER OF STORIES, ONE THREAD PERSISTS. MUJIB FEELS NEED TO DO SOMETHING TO REGAIN CONFIDENCE OF PEOPLE IN HIS GOVERNMENT, FOLLOW UP ON MILITARY DEPLOYMENT WHICH IS NOT PERCEIVED TO BE CLEANING UP CORRUPTION, AND CURB FACTIONALISM WITHIN HIS PARTY. MOREOVER, RUMORS FURTHER INDICATE THAT MUJIB DOES NOT REALLY COMPREHEND WHERE HIS TROUBLE LIES. RESTRUCTURING THE GOVERNMENT AND COSMETICALLY PURGINA A HANDFUL OF THE CORRUPT

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WILL NOT SOLVE HIS PROBLEM; ONLY FIRM DIRECTION OF THE GOVERNMENT AND REAL DISCIPLINING OF THE WAY BUSINESS IS DONE WILL RESTORE CONFIDENCE AND LIMIT CORRUPTION. MUJIB DOES NOT NEED MORE POWER; BUT HE DOES HAVE TO DECIDE TO USE THE POWER HE ALREADY POSSESSES CONSTRUCTIVELY. MORE EVIDENCE OF MUJIB'S MYOPIA IS HIS RRE-OCCUPATION WITH OPPOSITION OF ANY KIND, AS REFLECTED IN THE RUMORS OF SUPPRESSING THE OPPOSITION AND MERGING NAP/M AND CPB. NAP/M AND CPB HAVE LITTLE POWER AND ARE ALMOST TOTALLY SUBORDINATE TO

THE AWAMI LEAGUE NOW; MERGER AND COALITION GOVERNMENT WOULD ONLY GIVE THE ILLUSION OF A NEW UNITY. MUJIB'S OVERREACTION TO THREAT OF DEMONSTRATION BY ELDERLY MAULANA BHASHANI AND ATAUR RAHMAN KHAN (SEPTTEL), HOWEVER, INDICATES MUJIB DOES NOT PERCEIVE THIS POINT.

6. THE TALES ARE TOO VARIED TO PERMIT ADEQUATELY APPROPRIATE BOOKMAKING ON CHANGES COMING UP, BUT BASED ON REVIEW OF PAST PATTERNS OF RUMORS AND REALITY, IT IS NOT LIKELY THAT MUJIB WILL GO AS FAR AS THE WILDER STORIES ANTICIPATE. IT APPEARS TO BE ACCEPTED THAT WHATEVER SYSTEM EMERGES MUST BE ACCEPTABLE TO BANGLADESH ARMY. AND APPEARING TO GIVE SOME SUBSTANCE TO PROSPECT FOR CHANGE IS ONE REPORT THAT ELEMENTS OF ARMY ARE TRICKLING INTO DACCA, NOT TO OUST MUJIB BUT RATHER TO PRESS HIM TO CLEAN HOUSE.
BOSTER

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